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A

SHORT ACCOUNT

OF THE

EDWARDS' COLLEGE,

BUILT

AT SOUTH CERNEY,

FOR THE RECEPTION OF THE

WIDOWS & ORPHANS OF DISTRESSED CLERGYMEN,

OF THE

DIOCESE OF GLOUCESTER.

CIRENCESTER:

THOMAS PHILIP BAILY, MARKET PLACE.

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CHAPTER I.

MEMOIR OF THE FOUNDRESS OF THE COLLEGE.

THE circumstances relating to the founding and building of “EDWARDS’ COLLEGE,” are of so remarkable and interesting a nature, that it is fitting that some record should be preserved of them. And, as the deeds of the foundress are worthy of being handed down to posterity, they are here briefly offered to the public, before they are lost in oblivion.

Mrs. Ann Edwards, whose beneficence is to be recorded, was the youngest daughter of Mr. Thomas Hayward, who resided for some years at Casey Compton, in the parish of Withington, in the county of Gloucester. He occupied a farm belonging to the then Lord Chedworth, not far from Northleach. Mr. Hayward was twice married; first, to Ann Higford, of Alderton, by whom he had two children, Charles, who lived at Winchcombe, in this county, and who died a bachelor,

in July, 1806; and Sybil, who married Mr. Middleton, an eminent tradesman in London. Upon the death of his first wife, Mr. Hayward married, secondly, Esther Howse, widow of J. Hay Howse, of Bibury, gent., but whose maiden name was Jones, sister of John Jones, Esq. of South Cerney. The family of Jones has, for several generations, possessed a considerable portion of that parish, as well as property in other places. They have ever been as respectable for their integrity as their wealth, and, if we may judge from recent events, as eminent for benevolence and charity. The family is at this time (1839) represented by Thomas Jones, Esq. who was born Sept. 26th, and baptized Nov. 15th, 1763, whose generosity is well known, and who has benefited almost every charity, at various times, that has been instituted in this county. Mrs. Edwards, the subject of this memoir, was, therefore, first cousin to this gentleman, and the subsequent record of her charitable works will evince that the generous virtues were inherent in her family.

It has been already said that Mr. Hayward had been tenant to Lord Chedworth. Mr. H. was a peculiar favourite of his noble landlord; frank in his manners, well informed, and gentlemanly in his behaviour and conversation, he attracted the

esteem and respect of his lordship. This favour was shewn him upon all occasions, but the honour conferred proved of a rather disadvantageous nature to him. Lord Chedworth had been crippled in circumstances, and did not keep a very large establishment at Stowell Park. Residing only at an easy distance from his respected tenant, he was accustomed, not only to favour him with his own society, but also to bring many noble and distinguished friends and relatives to partake of his tenant's hospitality. The resources of Mr. Hayward were unequal to the expence such high society occasioned, and, about the year 1778, he was obliged to call his creditors together, and give up agricultural pursuits. Mr. Hayward was remarkable for a very fine herd of cattle; these were all sold for the benefit of his creditors, who received about 6*s.* 8*d.* in the pound. He died in August, 1785, and was buried at Temple Guiting, on the 19th of the same month. After his death, his widow, with her two daughters, came to reside at South Cerney, and her brother, John Jones, Esq. placed her in the manor house, nearly adjoining his own. In this residence she continued till her death, with a maiden sister, and gave her daughters the best education her limited means permitted.

In the year 1800 her eldest daughter Chrysogon died, leaving Ann, the younger to be the sole support of her declining age.

In 1802 an event occurred, that changed the views of the estimable subject of this book. The Rev. Isaac Edwards was ordained upon the title of the curacy of South Cerney, in the incumbency of the Rev. Anselm Jones, A.M., and came immediately into residence. It was not long ere an intimacy commenced, and Mr. Edwards and Miss Ann Hayward were united in the parish church of South Cerney, on the 7th day of October, in the year 1802.

Mr. Edwards was, at the juncture of his marriage, possessed of no other property than his curacy, which, as the vicarage is slenderly endowed, was necessarily small; and, as her mother and other relatives were still living, his lady was not in possession of any estate. The young couple therefore resided with Mrs. Hayward, in the manor house, who, by this arrangement, was not deprived of the society of her daughter.

In this quiet and peaceful manner were the first fourteen years of their married life passed in seclusion; their means allowing of few indulgencies, and their time unoccupied by the anxious cares of a family—they never had any children.

In the year 1813, Mrs. Edwards endured a long and painful attendance upon her mother, who was in declining health for many months, and who expired on the 12th of August, 1813, and was buried on the 16th. The whole fortune, small as it was, of this excellent parent, devolved upon her daughter; and about the same time, several other relatives, paying the debt of nature, by their bequests, considerably augmented the property of this worthy couple. The circumstances attending one acquisition of property are too remarkable to be passed over without notice. Mr. Edwards had an uncle residing in Wales, who had acquired reputation and property as an eminent surgeon, at Brecon. This kind relation assisted in educating him, and had placed him, at his own expence, at Pembroke College, Oxford. Mr. E., however, was only a younger nephew, and his uncle had adopted, educated, and bought a commission in the army for his elder brother, Samuel Pryse Edwards. This brother had given offence, by contracting a marriage that was displeasing to his relative; who thereupon promoted his exchange into a regiment then stationed in the East Indies, and altered his will, omitting the elder brother's heirs in bequeathing to him his property, ordering and devising that Isaac should succeed immediately

after his brother's decease, notwithstanding he might have a family.

In the year 1815, the worthy uncle at Brecon paid the debt of nature, leaving behind him an estate of about £9000. Isaac became immediately possessed of this property, as, unknown to him, his brother's health had yielded to the Indian climate, and he had deceased two days before his uncle, consequently the legacy to him had lapsed. The fate of the deceased's family was remarkable. His widow and five young children embarked on board the John Palmer, East Indiaman, and were never heard of after they left the Mauritius. They are supposed to have been swallowed up by the waves in that crazy old ship, and every soul on board to have perished !

So rapid was the accumulation of property, from the bequest of relatives about this time, that Mr. Edwards has been heard to say " that in the year 1815 he had lost eleven relatives, by the decease of all of whom he had more or less benefited." His brother Samuel's ill-fated family, no doubt, were included in this number.

But, alas ! he was not permitted long to enjoy this accession of property. In 1818 his health began to be seriously affected by symptoms of a pulmonary complaint, whilst his constitution

exhibited a great tendency to obstruction in the circulation of blood. In October, 1818, he took advantage of Mr. William Lawrence, the eminent surgeon of London, being in the country, in attendance upon a lady of property, to submit to a painful operation, from which he partially recovered; but, at the Bishop of Gloucester's visitation, in the May following, having remained long in Cirencester church with damp clothes, the effect of a rainy morning, he contracted an inflammation upon the lungs, which ended his useful and active life on the 30th of July, 1819. Upon this melancholy occurrence, a friend called at the manor house to offer assistance and consolation to the afflicted widow. She requested to see him, and, among many other causes for grief at her loss, mentioned that Mr. Edwards had overwhelmed her with his kindness and confidence in leaving, at her sole disposal, every species of property he possessed, without imparting, to her either by word or writing, any intimation how he would wish that it should be hereafter distributed. Deeming herself (such was her depression of spirits) to be drawing to the close of her existence, she requested this gentleman to assist her in drawing up instructions for her will. Her object appeared to be principally bent upon charity; and

it was finally agreed that application should be made to Mr. Lediard, Attorney-at-Law, of Cirencester, for the purpose of carrying into legal effect her benevolent purposes. Accordingly, soon after the funeral had taken place, Mr. Wm. Thompson, who then conducted the business, attended upon her at Cerney. At this melancholy visit, after the above important arrangement had been made, she spoke upon another topic, in a manner that so well exemplifies her character and upright disposition, that it is proper to use her own words. "When I was only three years old," she observed, "my father was compelled to compound with his creditors. Being thrown by circumstances into a high and expensive society, far beyond his means to support, he became involved; and I have experienced the pain for my whole life, of knowing that my parent's obligations have never been fully satisfied. I have always resolved, even from a child, if a gracious Providence should ever bestow upon me the power, to liquidate to the full what remained of my father's debts. When of late years we came into possession of property, Mr. Edwards kindly promised to gratify my wishes in this respect, and nothing but his protracted and painful illness has prevented our doing so long ago. The creditors in the course of nature pro-

bably are all dead, but I should wish to do an act of justice to their families, to some of whom no doubt the amount will be useful; and, being unexpected, will be the more acceptable. Here is a list of the deficiencies, and if you will kindly assist me in finding out the survivors, or the families of the creditors, and pay them what may severally be due to them, I shall feel greatly indebted."

The list being examined, and the amount proving not to exceed £700. her friend observed that, as the families of the creditors lived chiefly in his immediate vicinity, he would readily undertake the charge, and intimated that when her affairs were more settled, if she would give him a draft upon her banker for the above amount of £700. he would arrange the matter as she desired. "No, sir," she replied, "I shall not only pay the principal, but forty-three years' interest thereupon." In consequence, within a month after this conversation, she paid him over more than £2000. to liquidate these debts, to the no small surprize and delight of the several families which profited by this munificent and unexpected benefaction. One old man, of eighty-four years of age, to whose father £200. had been left unsatisfied, received £605. most opportunely to rescue him from a gaol.

This anecdote evinces the honourable principle and integrity of Mrs. Edwards's character more than volumes of eulogy could do.

In the disposal of her property, this benevolent lady had been chiefly actuated by just and charitable motives. Out of gratitude and affection to her husband's memory, she resolved to bequeath all the estate that had been received from his relations, to his family resident in Wales, and to dispose of the bulk of her own estate in charity, with a few legacies to her friends and executors.

Before time sufficient had been allowed to settle the testamentary affairs, her generous disposition had begun to exhibit itself. She immediately ordered a new clock for the parish church, at an expense exceeding £130. Also, a new set of scarlet embroidered cloths for the pulpit and reading desk, at the expence of forty pounds. And, before a year had expired, she evinced another still more striking and munificent instance of her kindness and consideration for the parish of South Cerney, by presenting to the vicar £1500. to build and endow a National School, for the education of their children in the principles and communion of the established church. Upon this noble benefaction being made known to her relative, Thomas Jones, Esq. he in his turn bestowed,

in the kindest and handsomest manner, an eligible piece of land as a site for the institution. And accordingly, in September, 1820, the first stone was laid of the School Houses ; and, in the course of the May following, both the Schools were opened for the reception of scholars. It was no small blessing of Mrs. Edwards's life, that it was prolonged to see the entire success of this admirable institution ; few schools have succeeded better. Under the very respectable mistress, Hannah Millard, and the able under mistress, Ann Harrison, the girls' school has eminently flourished. Whilst the boys have equally prospered under the superintendance of Mr. Edward Harrison, the master. The proficiency and attainments of the children, have been the theme of general praise with all the trustees and visitors, who, for twenty years, have attended their annual examinations at Whitsuntide.

In the year 1828, her benevolent relative, Mr. Jones, without solicitation, sent a message to Mrs. Edwards that he would be happy to convey to her trustees the residue of the orchard in which the Schools had been built, if she had any wish to erect houses of residence for the master and mistress. This kind offer was gratefully accepted, and, in the course of two years, the commodious

residences, now inhabited by the master and mistress, were built near the school, at a cost exceeding £1000. Thus did this most generous lady, in her lifetime, out of not very ample means (for Mr. Edwards's effects were calculated under £26,000.), bestow nearly £5,000. for charitable purposes; for the payment of her father's debts must be included in that description, since she lay under no legal obligation to discharge them.

In addition to these known and open instances of liberality, her hand was never withheld from her suffering neighbours; no distressed person ever applied at her door in vain. Upon every case of sickness, accident, or loss, her purse was never closed. But it was her regular pensioners, fourteen in number, that most constantly experienced her bounty. Two aged, crippled, or poor parishioners, came every day for food, so that each couple, once a week, were largely provided with meat, beer, and bread. This bounty continued with her life. When any of her pensioners died, another was sought out and provided for.

Whilst this excellent woman was thus benefiting the souls and bodies of her neighbours, her own appointed time drew nigh. In the summer of 1834, she was visibly declining; and, persisting in not being visited by any medical attendant,

died in the fifty-seventh year of her age. This event took place on the 11th of August, and she was buried on the 16th, the same day on which, twenty-one years before, her mother's remains had been deposited in the tomb. Her body was placed in the church-yard, as she directed, by the side of her husband, close to the south aisle, belonging to her family.

The affairs of this amiable lady having been thrown into Chancery, her executors have been hitherto prevented from erecting a monument to her memory in the church. A plain tomb only marks the spot where she was interred; but now the suit having been brought to a conclusion, Mr. Fulljames, the able architect, of Gloucester, is preparing a freestone memorial of her, that will, it is hoped, prove worthy of her character. It is to be erected on the south side of the belfry, immediately adjoining the family aisle. The inscription will be as follows.

This Monument
IS ERECTED TO THE MEMORY OF
ANN,
RELCIT OF THE REV. ISAAC EDWARDS, M.A.,
FORMERLY CURATE OF SOUTH CERNY.
SHE DEPARTED THIS LIFE ON THE 11th DAY OF AUGUST, 1834,
IN THE 57th YEAR OF HER AGE.

SHE WAS NEARLY ALLIED TO THE ANCIENT AND RESPECTED
FAMILY OF JONES,

PRINCIPAL PROPRIETORS OF THE SOIL IN THIS PARISH.

HER BENEVOLENCE HAS SELDOM BEEN SURPASSED.
HOW GREAT WAS HER PUBLIC AND OPEN BENEFICENCE, THE
FOLLOWING PLAIN STATEMENT WILL EVIDENCE;

BUT THE EXTENT OF HER PRIVATE CHARITIES WILL NEVER
BE DISCLOSED, TILL THAT DAY IN WHICH THE SECRETS OF
ALL HEARTS SHALL BE REVEALED, WHEN HER WORKS OF
LIBERALITY, BENEVOLENCE, AND INTEGRITY, WILL FOLLOW
HER, THROUGH THE MERITS OF THAT REDEEMER, IN WHOM
SHE TRUSTED, AND WHOSE EXAMPLE OF DOING GOOD SHE
HUMBLY ENDEAVOURED TO IMITATE.

IN 1820,

SHE GAVE £1,500. INTO THE HANDS OF CERTAIN TRUSTEES,
TO ESTABLISH AND ENDOW A

NATIONAL SCHOOL IN THIS PARISH.

SHE PRESENTED ALSO A

NEW CLOCK TO THIS CHURCH, AT A COST OF £130.;

AS WELL AS RICHLY-EMBROIDERED
HANGINGS TO THE PULPIT AND READING DESK,
TO THE AMOUNT OF £40.

IN 1828, SHE GAVE AN ADDITIONAL £1,000. TO BUILD
HOUSES OF RESIDENCE FOR THE MASTER & MISTRESS
OF THE NATIONAL SCHOOL.

BY HER WILL,

SHE LEFT IN THE HANDS OF TRUSTEES, £1,000. TO THE
POOR OF SOUTH CERNEY, THE INTEREST OF WHICH IS TO BE
DISTRIBUTED YEARLY, AT THEIR DISCRETION, ON
ST. THOMAS'S DAY, IN

BEDDING, CLOTHING, BIBLES, AND PRAYER BOOKS.

SHE ALSO LEFT THE RESIDUE OF HER PROPERTY
(AFTER HAVING GIVEN £500. EACH TO THE GLOUCESTER
INFIRMARY & SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN
KNOWLEDGE) TO THE

WIDOWS & ORPHANS OF DISTRESSED CLERGYMEN
OF THIS DIOCESE;

OUT OF WHICH AMPLE FUND THE NEIGHBOURING

COLLEGE,

CALLED IN GRATITUDE AFTER HER NAME, WAS ERECTED,
BY ORDER OF THE BISHOP & CLERGY,
IN 1838, FOR THE RECEPTION OF THE AFFLICTED FAMILIES
OF INDIGENT MINISTERS.

The character of this beneficent lady has been told in the history of her benefactions. Compassion for the wants of the needy, a purse ever open to reasonable and just claims, a conscientious discharge of the christian duty of doing good, governed every action of her life. The most uncompromising principle of integrity, a rooted respect for her parents, a kindness and courtesy to all around her characterised her conduct upon every occasion. Whilst she exhibited a more than usually comprehensive intellect, a well-informed mind, and very considerable conversational powers. In a few words, she proved herself a worthy disciple of Christ, by her noble liberality, her love and tenderness towards the poor and young, and by her great meekness and condescension to those of low estate.

Her constitution had received a rude shock during her last protracted attendance upon her mother. Long watchfulness, laborious nursing, and broken rest, impaired greatly her health ; this brought on depression of spirits, and an aversion for exercise and social intercourse. Her lengthened attendance, also, upon her husband, for whom she always entertained the greatest respect and affection, and the great anxiety consequent upon his failing health, contributed to hurry her

injured constitution to the grave. She survived him, however, fifteen years, but never could be prevailed upon to leave her house, after his departure to the world unseen.

CHAPTER II.

ACCOUNT OF THE BUILDING OF EDWARDS' COLLEGE.

THE length of time that had elapsed after Mrs. Edwards had executed her will, caused at the time of her death, unintentionally, a very different distribution to be made of her property, than what she had originally contemplated. One of the executors, Mr. William Thompson, who drew up the document, had died, and so also four out of the six Welsh legatees, to whom she had bequeathed that share of her property derived from her husband's family. By these lapsed legacies, by the improvement of the stocks, and a profitable sale of an estate in Brecknockshire, her residue, originally estimated at £3,000, had increased to £17,000. This residue she had bequeathed to the Charity for the Relief of the Widows and Orphans of distressed Clergy in the Diocese of Gloucester.

The announcement of this bequest, now so unexpectedly augmented, excited the greatest satisfaction to the clergy of all grades. To the poorer ministers, this aid held out the prospect of ample relief to their families ; whilst the better endowed portion rejoiced to hear of the welcome assistance thus extended to their more needy brethren. But this satisfaction was not destined to be of long continuance ; for a rumour began to be spread abroad that the will of this estimable person was about to be litigated ; and accordingly a bill was filed in the Court of Chancery, in Nov. 1834, in the name of the heir-at-law, Mrs. Middleton, half sister to the testatrix. The grounds of this litigation professed to be to recover the amount of the land and mortgages vested in the late Mrs. Edwards ; (land, and securities upon land, being prohibited by the statute of mortmain from being bequeathed to charitable purposes). This litigation was wholly unexpected by the executors, as the bill was filed by the same professional house which, fifteen years before, had been employed to draw up the document. The mistake in framing the will seems to have originated in throwing all the property of various kinds into what is legally called “hotch potch,” and the legacies, expences, and charities, were by mistake all indiscriminately

derived from the same source, and consequently as the sums left by this will for charitable purposes would thus be partially drawn from land, and securities upon land, their validity was vitiated. The suit has now been five years before the Chancellor, who has decreed to the heir-at-law about one-third of the residue. Difficulties having arisen about the distribution of the property, a compromise has been effected, and was sanctioned by the Master of the Rolls, on the sixth of August, 1839. By this arrangement the residue coming to the charity will greatly exceed what was expected at the commencement of the suit, and will leave a larger surplus, after the expence of the College has been defrayed (although twelve houses have been erected instead of eight) than what was contemplated at the beginning.

When this benefaction was announced to its full extent, some friends, much interested in the welfare of the charity, conceived that it would be desirable to appropriate a large portion of it towards erecting an asylum for the residence of the distressed and houseless pensioners, intended to be benefited by the testatrix. Accordingly when this view was proposed to the Lord Bishop, the Archdeacons, and others of the clergy of the diocese, it met with their cordial approbation.

Even when there was a prospect that the amount of assets would be materially diminished, owing to the pending suit in chancery, it was still considered desirable to proceed with building the College. Accordingly, at the annual meeting of the Charity for the Relief of the Widows and Orphans of Distressed Clergymen, held at Gloucester, in August, 1837, the proposal was laid before the subscribers, and was unanimously adopted. Perhaps this determination might have been in some measure promoted by the admirable drawings of Mr. Fulljames, that were submitted to the meeting. They gave the elevation and ground plan for a college, which displayed great taste and attention to convenience. It appeared highly desirable that this College should be erected at South Cerney, the parish in which Mrs. Edwards' family had large possessions, and where she had resided during almost the whole term of her existence; there, also, she had died, and there her remains were deposited. The difficulties of deciding the exact spot were removed in the most gratifying manner. When the proposition of erecting a College for the reception of the Widows and Orphans of the distressed Clergy was intimated to Mr. Jones, the idea seemed to be highly pleasing to his benevolent mind. He well knew the dis-

tress of many clergymen's families, who had long been accustomed to the comfort of a parsonage house, upon finding themselves suddenly bereaved not only of the husband and father, and of his professional income, but who, at that distressing moment, are turned out houseless upon the world: he felt that no step could be taken so likely to cheer the Widows' and Orphans' hearts as in such a moment to offer them a comfortable asylum. The compliment also paid to his relation's memory, in raising such a noble monument as the College must prove to her name, was not lost upon him, for he immediately signified his approbation by the promise of a piece of ground for the site. He requested that it might be built on the most conspicuous part of his estate, that the beauty of the edifice might be more extensively perceived, and the compliment intended to his relative more generally acknowledged. He recommended a portion of a rich and pleasant meadow, conveniently adjoining the principal highway to the village, as best calculated to promote his object, and, with his usual generosity and urbanity, presented it to the trustees. The conveyance bears date March the 11th, 1837.

When this new instance of benevolence was communicated to the meeting, in the month of

August of that year the gift of Mr. Jones was accepted with the warmest gratitude. It was resolved that the building should be called "Edwards' College" in commemoration of the munificent foundress; and that the excellent work should be commenced in the following spring. It was agreed also that two of the tenements should exceed the others in size and ornament, and that one should be called "Jones' Lodging," in grateful recollection of the benefactor who gave the site, and the other to be called the "Cerney Lodging" to be appropriated to the Widows and Orphans of any Clergyman, who should, at a future time, claim assistance of the Charity from having been connected with the Parish of South Cerney.

This was done, because Mrs. Edwards had expressed a hope in her will that any person so claiming, might receive particular attention (not defining what) from the Governors of the Charity benefited by her bequest.

At this same Meeting in 1837, a Committee was appointed to superintend the building of the College. This Committee consisted of the Lord Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol, the Dean of Gloucester, the Archdeacons of Gloucester and Bristol, and the Vicar of South Cerney, with power to add to their number. On the 17th of

March, 1838, the first stone of the College was laid by the Vicar, with appropriate prayers and hymns, in the presence of the Magistrates of the district, the Clergy of the neighbourhood, the Trustees of Mrs. Edwards' Charities, the Architect, the parish authorities, a large concourse of parishioners, and respectable strangers who attended to witness and adorn this imposing solemnity. Immediately, the building commenced, and in the course of the following summer, began to exhibit undeniable proofs of the correct taste and professional skill of the architect. The execution of the masonry reflects the highest credit on the workmen, who have been culled from all the principal works, under Mr. Fulljames' superintendence; and who, directed by the very skilful clerk of the works, Mr. St. Aubyn, have executed the designs laid before them in the most accurate and creditable manner. The weather being favourable, the masons continued their operations till after Christmas; during the severe part of the winter, they employed themselves in preparing stone for the spring; in March they resumed their labours, and early in August the whole roof was covered in, and five tenements rendered habitable for inmates.

One residence indeed was completed in May, and a pensioner, Louisa Willis, orphan daughter

of the late Rev. John Willis, Rector of Sutton-under-Brailes, in this Diocese, was admitted; she had been recommended by Thomas Jones, Esq. and upon his recommendation was unanimously appointed by the Bishop and other members of the Committee on the 22nd of that Month.



CHAPTER III.

DESCRIPTION OF THE BUILDING.

THE College is pleasantly situated in a park-like meadow, with an aspect nearly due South. The parish church is a pleasing object as viewed from the building. The College is approached with facility from the high road leading from South Cerney to Cirencester. Extending along its whole façade is a handsome terrace, parallel to which a wall marks the boundary of the ground, and forms one side of the sunk fence ; this wall rising only a little above the level of the terrace admits an uninterrupted view of the rich and ornamental pasture ground in front. The site of the building, terrace, and gardens, exceeds an acre in extent.

The College is built in the gothic style of architecture of the fifteenth century, partaking more of the domestic character than any other. A principal object of the architect appears to have been to convey to the mind a sense of repose and tran-

quality existing individually in each house, but to preserve enough of the features of collegiate architecture externally and generally, to indicate that such an edifice could alone be the result of some munificent, benevolent, and charitable act. The external walls are built chiefly of stone from the quarries of Kemble, finely worked in their courses; the plinths are of the hard weather stone from the quarries of Hampton Common, and the mouldings and carved work from the free-stone quarries of Nailsworth and Tormarton. The Masonry throughout is of the best description, and the effect of the range work, justly uniting with the large masses of block stone at the angles of the building and the windows, adds much to the beauty of both. The roofs are covered with the thick native brown stone slate (self rent), firmly fixed on well seasoned Memel timbers of large scantlings, and is of such a nature as to make not only the most desirable coverings to the occupants of the rooms under it, but is also most appropriate for architectural appearance.

The College consists of twelve houses distinct in themselves, but capable of being united, and forming one entire building. The centre part of it, contains two houses entered from under one archway, the receding parts on either side of the

centre, contain four houses each, entered from a cloister which fills up the recess, and a wing at either end projecting equally with the centre, forms one other house each, of larger dimensions. These two end houses, are entered from porches at the east and west sides of the building. Each house has upon the ground floor, a projecting or receding porch, a lobby, a sitting room fourteen feet by thirteen, and nine feet six inches high, fitted with convenient cupboards on each side of the fire place; a kitchen, back kitchen fitted with ranges and coppers, with out-offices and a small garden. An easy staircase leads to the first floor, having square newels chamfered at the edges with moulded caps and pendants. On the first floor are two bedrooms over the sitting room and kitchen, and a dressing room, or store closet over the lobby. Upon the attic floor is the same extent of accommodation.

The houses in the centre and wings have the apartments of a larger size, but are in arrangement similar. The entire length of the building to the angular buttresses, is two hundred and forty feet four inches, exclusive of the porches at each end. The height, from the level of the ground to the top of the parapet, is twenty-six feet.

The external appearance of the building is im-

posing from its magnitude and irregular outline. The strong lights and bold shadows, occasioned by the projection of the centre and the wings, and the deep shade of the cloisters, making the relief of the octangular shafts, which support the flat pointed arches of them the more evident, produce an effect highly characteristic of the style of architecture adopted in the design. Additional importance is given to the elevation, by the stone gables which spring from the parapets, give light to the upper rooms, break the appearance of continuity in the roof, and are various themselves in design, mostly terminating with finials: by the massive stacks of chimneys which have handsome moulded bases and battlemented caps; and by the elegant pierced octagon stone lantern which rises from the centre building. Purity and simplicity of style in the elevation have been a greater consideration than useless ornament or decoration, at the same time, it is thought no want of either is felt in contemplating the building. The windows are from one to three lights, and various in design; some of them are square headed, and some have flat pointed arched heads; they have stone mullions set back sufficiently from the front to produce an appearance of great depth; they are enlivened by handsome moulded drip stones over them, which terminate,

some, by the simple return of the moulding itself in angular and circular shapes, and others by resting upon plain projecting shields.

In the projecting centre and wings are buttresses at each angle with moulded set-offs: those to the centre terminating in a shaft that rises some height above the rampart; the others in the set-offs themselves. The gables form a still more prominent part, and are large enough for the roofs to finish against. The cornice of the building continues up them, in a parallel line with the roof and the parapet coping: within the space, or angle, formed by the upward inclining lines of the cornice, is some deep pannelling, containing the following inscription.

“ *Hoc Collegium quod indigentium Clericorum viduas orbosque recipiat, ex muneribus ANNÆ ISAACI EDWARDIS, olim pastoris hujus Ecclesiæ, viduæ, super agrum a THOMA JONES, armigero, largè condonatum, extructum est A.D. MDCCCXXXVIII.*” The following words would have been added, had it not been found that the space designed to receive it would have been insufficient, without producing a crowded appearance, and rendering it almost illegible. “ *Sub auspiciis Episcopi aliorumque hujus Diocesis ministrorum qui, ne tam eximiæ munificentæ*

posteris desit monumentum, has domos aedificari
jubebant." *

In the centre of the gables of the wings are square feathered pannels, containing quartrefoils and shields ; that of the east wing has the arms of Thos. Jones, Esq. the donor of the site; that of the west wing, those of the foundress, Mrs. Edwards.

The cloisters project about five feet ; they are light, elegant, and useful ; each is divided into nine compartments by octagon piers, that have moulded bases and capitals, a flat four centered and splayed arch, spans each opening : above the top of the arches is a deep moulded, battlemented cornice, which gives a finish, and secures the stone roof with which it is covered.

Notwithstanding the unforeseen rise of provisions which necessarily enhanced the price of wages, the original estimate has been very little exceeded. The general meeting in 1839, having sanctioned, for the benefit of the inmates, the supply of the fixtures and fittings up, an expence

* This College, designed for the reception of the Widows and Orphans of distressed Clergymen, was built out of a bequest of Ann, the Widow of Isaac Edwards, formerly Curate of this parish, upon a site, liberally given by Thomas Jones, Esq. in 1838, under the direction of the Bishop and Clergy of this Diocese, who ordered these houses to be built, as a lasting monument to posterity of such unbounded munificence.

has been incurred beyond what was first contemplated. Had the grates, cupboards, and coppers, been removed at the death of every inmate, the building would have sustained much damage; and, as the amount of the residue of Mrs. Edwards' property proved to be more considerable than was anticipated, the meeting humanely extended this additional boon to the pensioners of the charity.

This admirable Institution is designed to become an asylum for the families of deceased clergymen, who are left in distressed circumstances, and to offer a comfortable retreat to those afflicted persons, who, in addition to their other losses, are deprived of their homes, and are turned houseless upon the world. At present it is indispensable before their admission into the College, that they should be pensioners on the list of Widows' and Orphans' Charity, or the Music Meeting Fund. Widows are to have the preference of admission before Orphans; should any with large families apply, the tenements are so constructed that two may be inhabited by the same family. The power of admitting inmates is vested in the annual meeting of subscribers, holden at Gloucester, the first Thursday in every August, without, upon any particular occasion, the meeting should think proper to delegate its authority to a committee, as it has done in 1838-9. The

inmates are admitted under rules, which will be strictly enforced, especially those which are calculated to secure peace and good neighbourhood among the inhabitants. They are required to be constant attendants at the Parish Church, and frequenters of the Holy Table. There are no restrictions laid upon the visits of their female friends. They are allowed to have visitors, servants, and inmates, but no lodgers for hire. No male relations will be permitted to reside with them, without special permission, but widows' sons are admissible.

Should the pensioners upon the present list, now eighteen in number, not apply for the tenements, (and it is known that some will not do so) the College probably at a future time may be open to those distressed widows and orphans of the Gloucestershire Clergy, who may be possest of some small means, but who, nevertheless, would be much comforted by being supplied with a cheerful and convenient home.

The meeting in August, 1839, resolved to delay the completion of some of the tenements, till the yearly income should permit of a gradual outlay for that purpose. Whenever application shall be made for more residences, those now incomplete will be finished off immediately.

CHAPTER IV.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE PARISH OF SOUTH CERNEY.

The Parish of South Cerney, in which the College is situated, is three miles and a half south of Cirencester, and has derived its name from the river Churn, which fertilizes its lands, and has obtained the name of *South* in contradistinction to *North* Cerney, which lies equi-distant from Cirencester in an opposite direction. It is purely an agricultural parish, consisting of about 3000 acres, including its hamlet of Cerney Wick. Its population exceeds 1000, and has nearly 200 inhabited houses.

The river Churn, under able management, proves most beneficial to the meadows of this parish. The stream, being artificially raised for the benefit of the mills, gives ample opportunity for watering and flooding the lower lands. It is supposed that there is something in the quality of

the water that enriches the herbage beyond common experience.

The great advantages to be derived from this species of improvement, have induced spirited proprietors to lay out their water meadows with great skill and expence. So that Mr. Arthur Young, in his Agricultural Survey, holds up the South Cerney meads as equal, if not superior to any thing of the kind in the kingdom. Part of the parish was enclosed in 1809, when the tithes were commuted.

The land may be considered at present in a fair state of cultivation.

The soil near the river is, generally speaking oolite limestone gravel, which renders the village paths agreeable for walking, and, if the parishioners knew its value, this gravel might form one of the best species of materials for repairing the highways,—an improvement greatly to be desired.

Oh fortunatos nimium sua si bona nôrint
Agricolâs !

A bridge has of late years been erected over the Churn in the midst of the village, which proves of the utmost use, as well as ornament, to the place. There is also an ancient Cross with its pedestal, in an adjoining part of the parish, which has stood the brunt of many a century.

The Thames and Severn Canal intersects South Cerney, and by it are conveyed coals, stone, and all kinds of heavy goods to its various wharfs.

The principal landed proprietor is Thomas Jones, Esq.; Thomas J. Lloyd Baker, Esq.; Reginald Henry Bean, Esq.; The Dean and Chapter of Bristol, Mr. John Stevens, and numerous smaller freeholders, have also estates here. There are ninety-seven voters of this parish registered for the Eastern Division of the County of Gloucester.

The benefice is a discharged Vicarage; the Rectorial Rights have, ever since the Reformation, been vested in the See of Gloucester. When the parish was enclosed, in 1809, land was assigned to the Bishop in lieu of the Rectorial tithes upon the new inclosures, and a corn rent upon the old. William Hinton, Esq. of Daglingworth, in this county, is the Lessee; the Bishop is also Patron of the Living; the Vicarial Tithes have been commuted for a corn rent. The Rev. Richard Wilbraham Ford is the present Vicar. He was instituted into the benefice in 1808. The Rev. William Gray is Curate. The Church, dedicated to All-Hallows, contains a nave, and aisle on the north, with a south aisle also belonging to the Jones' family. Here are also their burying place,

and monuments to the memory of various members of that ancient race. In the middle of the edifice rises a low tower, from which springs a handsome and lofty spire. The internal view from the west end of the church, through the Norman arches of the belfry to the east window of the chancel, produces a very striking effect. The clock, the gift of Mrs. Edwards, keeps excellent time. Two galleries have been erected in the church within twenty years—one containing 17 pews, and accommodation for 100 girls ; the other capable of containing 30 persons, is appropriated to the use of the singers. “ The whole church,” says Mr. Lysons, “ is of Saxon architecture, and the south door, in particular, is very much enriched with heads and other ornaments of that era. In the chancel is a lavatory, with a canopy of Gothic foliage, excellently carved. The monument of the benevolent lady whose liberality has been so richly bestowed upon the parish, and who supplied funds for erecting the College, will always prove a most attractive object to the visitors of the building.

The Manor House, where Mrs. Edwards formerly resided, is now uninhabited, and betrays the usual symptoms of neglect of empty houses.

No parish has been, morally speaking, more

improved than South Cerney, within these few last years. There are persons living who remember when there was no day or Sunday school existing in the place, which was open for the instruction of the children of the labouring classes; and who also recollect when the rising generation of the parish wandered about, unrestrained, bare-footed; and scarce decently clothed. The benefit the National School has conferred in this respect, is incalculable; every child above three years may be admitted for education, and the knowledge the elder scholars attain of their religious and moral duties, has worked a very gratifying change in the conduct and manners of the lower orders. The rewards given in clothing to the children at the annual examination, have provided that the rising population of the parish shall be decently clad. The measure, also, that the trustees have lately adopted of purchasing land to let out in allotments, has greatly added to the comforts of the labouring classes, whilst the gifts of bedding, linen, Bibles, and Common Prayer Books, distributed at Christmas from Mrs. Edwards' bequest, are every year supplying the cottages with warmth, cleanliness, and spiritual comfort. What gratitude, therefore, is due to the memory of this excellent lady, who, whether living or dying, did not forget the poor

and needy, but provided that the children of the parish should be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, that they be trained in the sound doctrines of the Church of England, and be taught to lisp their Maker's praise, at the earliest dawn of their reason. She was not content with this, but by supplying them yearly with Bibles and books of devotion, she provided, as far as human foresight was able, that those of her poor neighbours, " who profess and call themselves Christians might be led into the way of truth, and might hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life."

But, if every individual in the parish owes a large debt of gratitude to the memory of the late Mrs. Edwards, for the benefits conferred on the bodies and souls of the labouring classes, what gratitude is due to the beneficent spirit of this admirable person, from the pensioners who may be hereafter admitted within the walls of the College. Herself the widow of a clergyman, and for many years of her married life by no means raised above the wants of her husband's profession, she had a tender feeling for the distresses of the desolate relicts of deceased ministers. For their use, therefore, she added a liberal bequest to the charitable benefactions of individuals. Though

her humble mind had not chalked out the manner in which it should be applied ; though she had never contemplated that so lasting a monument would be raised to her memory, as the building of the College ; yet that she would have approved the step that has been taken (perceiving the permanent benefit it would confer on the families of the poorer Clergy) there is no reason to doubt. Her sole purpose was to aid the distresses of others, certainly not to honour herself, but the grateful feelings of the profession she purposed to assist, have endeavoured, by this disposal of a portion of her gift, not only to confer a lasting benefit on the Widows and Orphans of the poorer Clergy, but, likewise, to perpetuate the remembrance of such munificence and liberality to future generations.

EXTRACTS FROM THE WILL
OF THE LATE
MRS. EDWARDS,

Bearing date 9th Day of November, 1819.

“ I give and devise to the use of the Rev. Richard Wilbraham Ford, Vicar of South Cerney aforesaid; and to the Rev. James Buckoll, Rector of Siddington; and to William Thompson, Esq. of Cirencester, all in this County, upon trust, all my landed estates, bond debts, mortgages and funded property of whatever kind to pay the residue, if any, of the said monies so given to my said trustees and arising from such sale and all the interests and dividends thereof, to the Charity for the benefit of the Widows and Orphans of Clergymen, as hereinafter is more particularly mentioned.” [Page 4.]

Extract from Page 7.

“ And the residue of the said monies first hereinbefore given to my said executors being monies due from persons and property in Wales. And

as to the residue of all other my personal chattels rights and credits whatsoever and wheresoever not hereinbefore otherwise disposed of, I give the same to my executors hereinafter named in trust, that they, or the survivors or survivor of them, and the executors and administrators of such survivor shall and do thereout, pay and discharge all my just debts and funeral and testamentary expenses. And also all the legacy duty, upon the respective legacies and monies hereinbefore directed to be paid free of such duty. And also all the costs, charges and expences of performing and executing the trusts and purposes of this my Will; and shall, and do, from time to time, or at such time or times as they or he shall think proper, within two years next after my decease; pay the surplus and residue thereof, together with such interest or dividends as shall be made of the same, unto the treasurer for the time being of the Charity instituted in aid of the distribution annually made by the stewards of the meeting of the Three Choirs, for the relief of widows and orphans of clergymen, and families of distressed clergymen in the Diocese of Gloucester. To be by the said treasurer invested in the public funds, in the name of the names of the officers of the said charity, and the dividends to be applied towards carrying on the

benevolent purposes of the said charity. And it is my desire, that should any clergyman, or distressed family of any clergyman apply as connected with South Cerney, a particular regard may be paid to every such applicant, within the extent of the dividends and interest of my said bequest. Provided always, and it is my express will and direction, that my said executors or survivors or survivor, or the executors or administrators of such survivor, shall, within a twelvemonth after my decease, make and deliver to the treasurer for the time being of the said last mentioned charity, a certificate or declaration, under their or his hands or hand, of the sum total of monies which the said charity shall be then entitled to, under, and by virtue of this my will; which declaration shall be binding and conclusive to, and upon all persons interested or concerned in the funds of the said charity."

" I give to the Rev. Wilbraham Ford, Vicar of South Cerney aforesaid; Thomas Jones, of South Cerney aforesaid, Esq.; John Thomas Lloyd Baker, of Hardwick, Esq.; the Rev. Edward Daubeney, of Ampney, in the said County, Clerk; the Rev. James Buckoll, of Siddington, Clerk; the Rev. Lewis Clutterbuck, of Ozleworth, in the said County, Clerk; the sum of £1,500, free of

legacy duty, as a fund for maintaining a School in South Cerney aforesaid, (of the description known by the name of National,) for giving the lower orders of children in that parish such instructions as is usual in that sort of school, and I direct that the said last mentioned monies or such part thereof as shall not be requisite for the purposes of the said school in the first instance, shall be invested in the purchase of stock in the public funds, in the names of the said last mentioned trustees. And they shall have full power to alter or vary such funds at their discretion, and I recommend that one of the said trustees may from time to time be appointed Treasurer and empowered to receive the dividends and interests thereof, all which said dividends, and interests thereof, I direct the said trustees for the time being, to apply and dispose of in carrying on the said School, in such manner as they shall think proper; but it is my request that on points of religious instruction, and as to the admission of children, due deference shall be paid to the opinion of the officiating clergyman of South Cerney aforesaid. Provided always, that if I shall by deed, make a provision for establishing and maintaining a School in South Cerney aforesaid, of the description hereinbefore mentioned, and such provision shall at my decease be valid and effectual

in the law, then, and in such case, I declare that the provision hereinbefore made for maintaining the said School, shall be null and void to all intents and purposes whatever." N.B.—Mrs. Edwards having in 1820, established a National School in South Cerney, and paid over to the trustees £1,500, to erect the School Houses and endow the School, this bequest lapsed. *Vide* Pages 4 and 5 of the Will.

A further Extract from Page 5.

" I give and bequeath to the same trustees the further sum of One Thousand Pounds, free of legacy duty, to be invested in the purchase of stock in the public funds, and to be varied and altered at their discretion, and to pay, apply, and dispose of the dividends thereof, annually, on St. Thomas' Day, for the purpose of providing bedding, clothing, Bibles, and Prayer Books, for the benefit of such of the poor of South Cerney, and in such manner as the trustees thereof for the time being, or the major part of them shall at such annual meeting from time to time agree upon. Provided always, and I hereby direct, that the said trustees shall from time to time, whenever vacancies occur, choose other trustees from amongst

the number of gentlemen and clergy in the neighbourhood, the Vicar of South Cerney for the time being, I direct, shall always be one, and that the same trustees shall act for both charities."

REGULATIONS
TO BE OBSERVED BY THE INMATES OF
EDWARDS' COLLEGE,

At South Cerney, in the Diocese of Gloucester.

I.—That no person be admitted into the College but by the vote of the Annual Meeting of the Clergy Charity, held at Gloucester, in August of every year, or by persons authorised so to do by the meeting.

II.—That Widows of deceased Clergymen shall have a prior claim for admission to Orphans.

III.—That the inmates shall attend regularly, unless prevented by illness, the parish church at South Cerney, every Sunday and festivals, morning and evening, and be generally communicants of the holy Sacrament.

IV.—That the College may be an Asylum of peace and repose, the Committee shall have power to fine any inmate, who, after reproof, shall be guilty of exciting strife and contention. That whenever a subject of dispute shall arise among the inmates, the person deeming herself aggrieved, shall apply to the Vicar, or in his absence, to the Officiating Minister, who will enquire into the case; and if he fails to

allay the contention shall report the offending parties to the Committee.

V.—That no dogs, poultry, or pigs, shall be permitted in the College.

VI.—That no lodgers for hire shall be received into any of the houses, nor any male resident visitor, without permission of the Committee.

VII.—That no inmate shall be absent from the College more than two nights consecutively without leave from the Committee, or some person delegated by them.

VIII.—That no insane person shall be admitted, and that any inmate becoming insane, shall be removed as quickly as possible from the College.

IX.—That any of the inmates transgressing the above Rules, being guilty of quarrelling, intemperance, Sabbath breaking, neglect of cleanliness in the house, garden, or walks, shall be, after warning, fined at the discretion of the Committee; upon a second offence, they shall be liable to expulsion from the College.

X.—That these Rules shall not be changed, except at the General Annual Meeting, to be held on the first Thursday of every August.



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BAILY PRINTER CIRENCESTER.







